2:Purcell G-4 (no date) 1951 AL1 Southeast Asia AL1
Chinese

people of Tumposok where he first saw natives ploughing. The plough was of a very simple construction, serving rather to scratch the ground than to turn it over, was entirely of wood, and was drawn by a buffalo, and its action was the same as if a pointed stick had been dragged through the land to a depth of about four inches. After ploughing, they used a rough kind of harrow. 'I think this superior agriculture', says St John, 'is obviously a remnant of Chinese civilization.'[1]

Tangible evidence of Chinese contact with Sarawak is afforded by the 'sacred jars', undoubtedly of Chinese origin. The 'jar cult' played an important role not only in Borneo but also among the Moi of southern Indochina, in the Philippines, in Formosa, and various other parts of the Indonesian region. (Dr Heine-Geldern remarks that Professor Janse's recent discoveries in Indochina may help to solve the origin of this cult.) St John describes the several kinds of jars existing in Sarawak. The best known were the Gusi, the Rusa, and the Naga. The most valuable, the Gusi, was a green colour, about 18 inches in height, and was, from its medicinal properties, exceedingly sought after. One fetched at Tawaran the price of £400 to be paid in produce. The Naga was a jar two feet in height ornamented with Chinese dragons. This was at this time worth only £7–8; while the Rusa, covered with the figures of some kind of deer, was worth £15–16.[2] Another jar, the Ningkah, mentioned in another contemporary account, fetched $150.[3]

These jars were the principal commodity in the Chinese trade with Borneo and other islands. This trade may have been of the 'silent' variety, when Chinese junks, laden with silk, beads, iron,

[1] It is interesting to compare this description with that of a native plough of supposedly Chinese origin in the Philippines (see p. 613), and there is a reference to another plough not of local design in Malaya (see p. 314).

[2] Ling Roth, op. cit. ii. 284.

Every Dyak tribe possessed some jars according to their riches or importance, though, as one European lady remarks, 'no one would suppose from their appearance that they were worth more than the common earthenware water-pots we use in our bath-houses'. They were, in fact (to judge from examples in the Sarawak Museum), of as cheap a quality as the Chinese trader could persuade the natives to purchase. Examples of these jars are illustrated in Plate 159 of N. Ottema, *Ceramiek Handboek*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam, J. H. de Bussy, 1946).

One special jar, owned by the Sultan of Brunei, was supposed to have magical qualities, and Bisayas used to come with presents for the Sultan to obtain in return a little water from the jar with which to sprinkle their rice-fields to ensure good crops.

[3] L. W. Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East* (W. H. Allen, London, 1882) p. 153, cited by Ling Roth, op. cit. ii. 280.

Chapter Twenty-four

INDUSTRY AND TRADE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

If "industry" be taken to include all activities connected with processing, then there is more industry in Southeast Asia than appears at first glance, though not much manufacturing in mechanised factories may be found. The territory is, however, overwhelmingly agricultural and in almost every part of the region it is subsistence agriculture which employs and sustains the largest number of people. Much manual processing is done by these subsistence agriculturists on their own little farms to prepare their production for their family consumption.

Cottage Industries

The tradition of being self-supporting in each territory, the national counterpart of individual subsistence farming, is very strong even today, finding expression in the widespread cottage industry of weaving and in that Southeast Asia custom of making a single length of span-broad, hand-made cloth the basis of a skirt-like dress—the *sarong*, *lungyi*, *panung* and so on. Today this domestic weaving, where it has managed to persist in spite of competition from cheap imported cloths, uses imported cotton yarn, although parts of Burma still weave homegrown silk, and Siam and Indochina continue home-weaving on the basis of Indochinese silk. Only in Java has the "cottage industry" become elaborated into a village factory industry for a more intensified and commercialised production of sarongs. Ninety-two per cent of Java's *batik sarongs* (printed cotton skirts worn by men and women alike) come from factories of less than 80 workers each; this specialised process of dyeing in patterns defined by wax is now done by the small factory working upon imported cotton cloth.

The other considerable domestic industry deriving from the subsistence tradition is that of making innumerable varieties of articles from plaited palm leaves. Containers of many sorts, hats, domestic utensils, house walls, mats, fish traps and agricultural

5: Dobby K-4 (no date) 1950 ALL Southeast Asia ALL

tools are all made by villagers using the palms and bamboos of their setting. Boats, shoes and tools are made of wood by peasants, mostly for their own use. While this type of industry usually secures no place in national statistics and has low monetary value, it plays a most important part in Southeast Asia life which may be described as still in the "Wood Age" so far as most peasant and rural life is concerned. Domestically-made cigars and cigarettes supply local needs and rapidly displace the *areca* or *betel* chewing habit. In Burma, the Philippines and Java cigar-making has become commercialised for trade and export; in Java some $9 million of hand-made cigarettes entered trade during 1937.

Throughout the region, too, are scattered remnants of a metal-working industry, as in the beaten silver of Malaya and Java, the niello work of Siam, and the gold settings for precious stones in Burma.

But these domestic industries rank as small by external standards and they play a negligible part in international trade. They must not be forgotten, however, because in the evolution of Southeast Asia we may see grow up forms of industrialisation originating in these domestic industries, as has been the case in the industrial evolution both of Europe and of the Far East. In these domestic industries little or no money is involved. At their simplest they are "subsistence industries" providing the family needs and scarcely anything more.

Thus most Southeast Asia people produce what food their families need and what articles they need. Their requirements from outside are very small and in any case their way of life involves so little money that they have small means to buy anything outside their local subsistence ecology. That was the earlier condition everywhere in Southeast Asia before the industrial revolution in Europe, and it continues both in the simple form and in many variations even today, when there have evolved groups of people in Southeast Asia who are entirely dependent on wages to buy food and what other articles they need. The subsistence principle is still strong in that very little money interchange goes on among the great majority of the population; some of them by doing part-time work earn wages, yet the money they earn has a very low average, indicated by the very low per capita revenues of the various states. Just before the war, Indochina revenue